MAKING SERVICE COUNT!
Service Hours are valuable!

The “work” of the Junior Auxiliary member is the “hour,” which members earn when doing projects. This is one of the first things we learn when we are Provisionals. The Provisional Training manual tells us exactly how and when to record our JA hours whether they be for Service projects, Finance, Administration, or Education. (pp. 14-15) Over the years, however, some of those “how to” pearls that we have learned about earning and recording Service hours are getting lost in the bottom of a jewelry drawer somewhere! Allow me to bring those gems back for you to consider again.

We have been asked if it is acceptable to work hours for others who may be experiencing illness or an especially busy time in their life. It has also been suggested that Life or Associate members can work hours for Actives at some point, and that hours can be “shared” or “bought.” WOW! Let me answer these very simply: No and Never.

In Junior Auxiliary, we have policies allowing for the leave of absence of a member should they feel that they cannot continue their work in JA for a year. We also allow for reinstatement of members at the discretion of the local Chapter board, should a member need to sit out for more than a year. As difficult as this may be to enforce, it is necessary in order to maintain our standards and consistency for all Chapters in the organization. When you sign on for Junior Auxiliary, you agree to follow the rules and policies set forth by your Chapter and the National organization. If you want to be in JA, you MUST earn your hours yourself!

We have also become aware of the practice of earning Service hours for simply buying a batch of cookies for an event, or for writing a check for a fundraiser. This is poor practice. A “Service” hour is just that. An hour that you spend serving others in some capacity. The busy lives that we are leading today have begun to affect Chapter projects by turning them into hands OFF activities in which items are purchased or donated only. There is a lack of personal connection and a relationship with those we serve is never established. Retention of your members will become an issue as your ladies are not emotionally invested in their projects or the Chapter. We urge all Chapters to create and sustain hands ON projects where members can truly spend time (hours) helping others. One hour of Service = one recorded hour.

Ladies, Junior Auxiliary is not an easy ride, and it is not for everyone. This is precisely why we strongly suggest to Chapters that they recruit only those who understand the commitment that is required of a JA member and who are willing to make their service a priority in their lives. We are indeed “messengers” to hearts and lives in our communities. How, then, can we truly minister to the “suffering and forlorn,” if we are never in their presence? As we continue in the work of Junior Auxiliary, let us remember that true service TO others and WITH others is why we become members in the first place!

SUPER-AEC in Memphis, Tennessee!

Your NAJA staff and volunteers are busy preparing a super conference for you in Memphis, April 29-30. The question is …are you planning to be there to see what super things your sister Chapters did this past year? If not, NOW IS THE TIME!

Your presence at your conference offers you the opportunity to learn how to be a more productive Chapter member. Speakers and workshops have been planned with you in mind. Glennon Doyle Melton and Kim Gavel are just two of the speakers that will entertain and inform.

Take the time now to plan your weekend with fellow JA members! How do you know you won’t like a conference if you never attend? This conference is for you!

Don’t Forget to Send Out Notices for Dues

If your Chapter hasn’t begun sending out dues notices to Active and Associate members, now is the time to start! Dues should be collected no later than April 15th. This is a great opportunity for Chapters to re-engage dropped Associate members. Former Associate members can rejoin any time and NAJA can provide a list of these members along with information on dues owed. Your Treasurer’s Manual has a sample Associate dues letter on page 11 and here are some tips on collecting Associate dues:

- Have a written specific and consistent procedure in place from year-to-year for collection of Associate dues. In December of each year, you will receive information from NAJA Headquarters listing each Associate member of your Chapter and the amount they owe to go straight to Life. That allows you to give each Associate the option of paying current year dues or in full.
- Offer Associates an alternative to writing and mailing a check for payment, such as PayPal.
- Send out notices via email in addition to a mailed notice of dues. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope in mailed letters and links for payment in emails.
- Allow Actives to pre-pay all or part of their upcoming Associate dues during their Active years.
- Begin sending out notices as soon as possible (in January) and send reminder notices as needed. You may even want to send out dropped notices in June if dues are still unpaid.
- Keep Associates in the loop regarding Chapter activities. It is important that Associates maintain a connection with JA.